

REMARKS

In response to the action of September 3, 2010, applicants ask that all claims be allowed in view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks. Claims 36-47, 53, 57, and 61-66 are currently pending, of which claims 36, 57, and 66 are independent. Claims 36-39, 41-47, 53, 57, and 61-65 have been amended, claims 48-51, 59, and 60 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and claim 66 has been added. This amendment is being filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination.

Interview Summary

Applicants' undersigned representative thanks Examiner Borissov for the courtesies afforded during the interviews conducted on January 19, 2011 and January 31, 2011. During the interviews, Examiner Borissov and applicants' representatives discussed proposed amendments to independent claim 36. Notably, in the interview of January 31, 2011, Examiner Borissov agreed that the above amendments to claim 36 appeared to overcome the cited references. This reply reflects the substance of the interview.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 36-51, 53, 57, 59, and 60-65 have been rejected as being unpatentable over O'Brien (Computers in Business Management) in view of Gharavy (U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2003/0004840) and Lederer (U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2002/0023109) and claims 47-51 have been rejected as being unpatentable over O'Brien in view of Gharavy, Lederer, and Al Senia (The Internet Forefront). Based on the following remarks, withdrawal of the § 103 rejections and further examination are respectfully requested.

Referring to particular claim language, amended independent claim 36 recites a method comprising, among other things, configuring business rules based on the first jurisdiction of the energy supplier and the second jurisdiction of the customer, the configured business rules being appropriate for handling transactions in accordance with jurisdictional requirements for energy transactions engaged in by the energy supplier, accessing, from among the configured business rules and based on information in the first transaction record, a first business rule describing a response business transaction expected to be completed between the energy supplier and the customer in response to the customer enrollment transaction, the first business rule including an

acceptable time period in which the response business transaction is required to be completed to comply with jurisdictional requirements imposed by the first jurisdiction of the energy supplier and the second jurisdiction of the customer, processing, by the computer system, the second transaction record using the first business rule, tracking, by the computer system, information related to business transactions between the energy supplier and the customer to identify a schedule of recurring transactions that occur in a lifecycle of business between the energy supplier and the customer, and determining, by the computer system and in response to processing the second transaction record, a next expected energy usage business transaction between the energy supplier and the customer and a second time period of when the next expected energy usage business transaction is expected to be received based on the tracked schedule of recurring transactions that occur in the lifecycle of business between the energy supplier and the customer.

The applied references are not seen to disclose, teach or suggest the foregoing features recited by independent claim 36. In particular, O'Brien describes a bill payment system that monitors for payments and sends a reminder when a payment has not been received and is overdue. See O'Brien at pages 297-298. Lederer describes a shipping service that facilitates compliance with jurisdictional rules in shipping orders. Lederer at paragraphs [0040] to [0042]. Gharavy is directed to determining whether a representative has met licensing requirements of a third party licensing authority and Al Senia describes how a utility company switches to e-commerce and interacts with customers over the Internet. For the reasons discussed in the interviews conducted on January 19, 2011 and January 31, 2011, applicants submit that the applied references fail to describe or suggest configuring business rules based on the first jurisdiction of the energy supplier and the second jurisdiction of the customer, the configured business rules being appropriate for handling transactions in accordance with jurisdictional requirements for energy transactions engaged in by the energy supplier, accessing, from among the configured business rules and based on information in the first transaction record, a first business rule describing a response business transaction expected to be completed between the energy supplier and the customer in response to the customer enrollment transaction, the first business rule including an acceptable time period in which the response business transaction is required to be completed to comply with jurisdictional requirements imposed by the first jurisdiction of the energy supplier and the second jurisdiction of the customer, processing, by the

computer system, the second transaction record using the first business rule, tracking, by the computer system, information related to business transactions between the energy supplier and the customer to identify a schedule of recurring transactions that occur in a lifecycle of business between the energy supplier and the customer, and determining, by the computer system and in response to processing the second transaction record, a next expected energy usage business transaction between the energy supplier and the customer and a second time period of when the next expected energy usage business transaction is expected to be received based on the tracked schedule of recurring transactions that occur in the lifecycle of business between the energy supplier and the customer, as recited in amended independent claim 36. Notably, in the interview of January 31, 2011, Examiner Borissov agreed that these features appeared to be missing from the applied references. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 36.

Independent claims 57 and 66, although different in scope from claim 36, recite features similar to those discussed above with respect to independent claim 36. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 57 for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 36 and timely allowance of new independent claim 66.

The other rejected claims in the application are each dependent on these independent claims and are thus believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each claim is deemed to define additional aspects of the disclosure, however, the individual consideration of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

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Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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